



Share the Wellness Tip

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Brave The Crave

Becoming an ex-smoker isn't easy for most people. One of the biggest hurdles you will face is handling nicotine cravings — intense urges to smoke.

These powerful cravings aren't all in your mind. They're part of the physical withdrawal process your body goes through as it gets used to life without nicotine again. People who smoked the longest or smoked a greater number of cigarettes each day are more likely to have withdrawal symptoms. Cravings usually begin within an hour or two after you stub out your last cigarette, and they build to a peak over the next several days.

You may notice these common symptoms of nicotine withdrawal:

- An intense craving for nicotine
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Drowsiness or trouble sleeping, as well as bad dreams and nightmares
- Feeling tense, restless, or frustrated
- Headaches
- Increased appetite and weight gain
- Problems concentrating

Luckily, quitting gets a little easier each day as cravings grow weaker and further apart. Occasional, mild cravings may last for up to 6 months. Eventually, they'll fade away.

Just remember: Each craving is short-lived. If you can wait it out for just a few minutes, the urge will pass and you'll be one step closer to quitting for good. Try drinking water, taking a walk, calling a friend or chewing sugar free gum. If your craving for nicotine continues, call 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) for help.

Sources: American Cancer Society; MedlinePlus

